

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Harberton Parish Council held on Tuesday 11 April 2000 at Harbertonford Primary School at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Monaghan, Hockings, Mason, E Janes, Preston-Day, Stubbings, Hoddinott, Fearn, Mills, Christiansen, District Cllr Mrs Steer and Devon County Cllr O Masters

Apologies: Cllr S Jane

Also Present: Mr J Constantine of Environment Agency, Mr T Eden of SHDC, Mr J Halliday of DCC Highways and PC Martin Sutcliffe of Totnes Police

Clerk: Mrs D Crann

Members of the Public: 31

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. The minutes of last year's meeting were then considered, agreed and signed by him as a true record.

The Chairman then invited Mr Eden to speak. He introduced himself to the meeting, giving a preliminary outline as to why he and his colleagues were attending. He then introduced Mr Constantine, who was already known to most of the meeting. He, in turn, commenced by outlining the progress of the River Harbourne re-appraisal, since the last time he had attended a Parish Council meeting two months ago. Halcrows were still in the process of studying the hydrology of the river and the frequency of flooding. They reported that since the 1997 report, there had been double the amount of damage sustained in the area, so an extended survey of the river would give a better idea of flood flows. The Environment Agency is required to find an economic relief scheme – ie: the ratio of benefits to cost. Maintenance work was in progress at the bottom of Moreleigh Road, part of which had been completed. Work from the Churchyard, under A381 to the outfall below the road bridge would, hopefully, follow. Mr Constantine also reported that the recent flooding at the end of 1999 had been the worst since 1938.

The lower section of the river, to Crowdy Mill and beyond, will also be fully surveyed and some dredging work may be beneficial. Work was also in progress at the entrance road to the former Zion Chapel. This was being carried out by DCC.

There was a full discussion, many questions answered by Mr Constantine and Mr Halliday. These gentlemen agreed to return again to report progress in two months time. They then left the meeting, together with Mr Eden.

The Chairman then invited PC Sutcliffe to speak. He introduced himself to the meeting, saying he had been appointed as our new Community Policeman. He itemised several incidents which had recently been reported in Harbertonford. The general feeling of the meeting was one of concern at the increase in petty vandalism by youths in the village. PC Sutcliffe promised top patrol, Harbertonford on a regular basis, also on foot whenever time allowed. He stressed that the 999 number should be used in cases of emergency. If any minor incident were reported, any of the Parish Councillors would be able to contact him on a direct phone number and they should be contacted. PC Sutcliffe then left the meeting.

Devon County Councillor Owen Masters then spoke. He particularly mentioned the £6,000,000 cutback in the Social Services budget and asked that if anyone knew of any person suffering as a result, would they contact him. He also mentioned the proposed redevelopment and amalgamation of KEVIC and The Grove Schools in Totnes. This was still in the consultation stage. Cllr Masters advised that since Christmas he had attended three major flood meetings at County Hall. He then left to attend another meeting.

Chairman's Report: He started by thanking the Vice Chairman, Clerk and Councillors for their help and support during the past year. The bus shelter in Harbertonford had now been completed and thanks were due to Cllr S Jane who kept it clean and tidy. Cllr S Jane had also recently replaced a seat at the Ford area in Harbertonford, which had been washed away in floods, for which many thanks. Double yellow lines were now in place in Moreleigh Road at the request of Fire and Rescue. There had been problems in Harbertonford with vandalism, but we now had a new Community Policeman in PC Sutcliffe. A new Shuttle was expected at the end of April. Apart from the disastrous flooding in Harbertonford, Harberton had also suffered, but not to the same extent. Last, but not least, thanks were expressed to District Councillor Mrs Steer and Devon County Councillor Owen Masters for their continued help and support.

A member of the public asked if rubbish behind the bus shelter could be removed.

Harbourne Shuttle: Barbara Lawrence (for Cllr S Jane) reported that the new bus would be launched on 29 April 2000 at 11.00am at Harbertonford Village Hall.

Harbertonford Primary School: Cllr Christiansen, as a School Governor, said that the recent Ofsted report had been encouraging and the school provided a supportive environment, with good relationships between pupils and teachers. There had been a trip to London, also to the Theatre Royal, Plymouth. School teams took part in several sports and had just won a swimming trophy. There was now a pre-school group and a mother and toddler group.

Harbertonford Playground: Cllr Christiansen said thanks were expressed to the Parish Council for sharing with the Primary School in the cost of grass cutting. It was now hoped that there might be resources to make some improvements at the playground.

Harbertonford Village Hall: Cllr E Janes said money had now been raised for a disabled toilet. Work should start soon. Also, new lighting was needed and fund-raising is to start immediately. Bookings remain very good.

Harberton Parish Hall: Cllr Stubbings reported that bookings looked good with many regular events already booked. Improvements had been carried out on the main steps, with handrail. Also, the upper car park. More chairs had been purchased, also stage blocks.

Harberton Playing Fields Association: John Culf continued to administer this and had now purchased a new tractor/mower.

Feoffees: District Cllr Mrs Steer reported that a new investment strategy was being followed, giving better rates of interest. Last October 48 cheques of £20.00 each had been distributed. It had now been decided to increase the sums in future.

SHDC: District Cllr Mrs Steer then gave a short report. There were now a reduced number of 40 councillors. Cllr Owen Masters was the Leader of the Council and a new Chief Executive, Miss Ruth Bagley, had now been appointed. With the next elections, the government proposals are for a Cabinet-style system. The Best Value Performance Plan proposals were very important, but are proving expensive. The increase in Council Tax this year had been kept to a minimum.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm